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SUBJECT: INTSUM 477 - JANUARY 11, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING
PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

SECRET/NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. ISRAEL. OPPONENTS OF BEGIN'S PEACE PLAN DEMONSTRATED IMPRESSIVE STRENGTH AT THE HERUT CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING ON JANUARY 9. ALTHOUGH BEGIN SPOKE ELOQUENTLY AND AT LENGTH, A MAJORITY OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS DID NOT ENDORSE HIS PEACE PLAN. INSTEAD, THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE "TOOK NOTE" OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN BY VOTE OF 168 IN FAVOR AND 15 OPPOSED. MORE IMPORTANT, OVER 500 MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENTED THEMSELVES FROM THE VOTING.

2. THE STRENGTH OF THE OPPOSITION WITHIN BEGIN'S OWN HERUT PARTY ALSO WAS EVIDENCED WHEN THE VOTE WAS TAKEN TO DETERMINE WHO SHOULD FILL A NEWLY CREATED POST AS MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO. SHMUEL KATZ POLLED 207 VOTES AGAINST 306 VOTES FOR BEGIN'S CANDIDATE, HAIM LANDAU. KATZ'S SHOWING IS ESPECIALLY NOTEWORTHY IN VIEW OF HIS

RESIGNATION SEVERAL DAYS AGO AS BEGIN'S INFORMATION ADVISOR. DURING THE DEBATE, KATZ SHARPLY ATTACKED BEGIN'S PEACE PLAN AND WAS IN TURN ATTACKED BY BEGIN, WHO SAID THAT KATZ "DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE IS TALKING ABOUT."

3. BEGIN'S WARNING TO SADAT THAT ISRAEL MIGHT WITHDRAW ITS PEACE PROPOSAL IF SADAT REJECTED IT, AND HIS
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PLEDGE THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT ABANDON ANY JEWISH SETTLEMENTS, CLEARLY FAILED TO REASSURE HERUT. ON THE OTHER HAND, KATZ'S CRITICISM STRUCK A RESPONSIVE CHORD. KATZ CHARGED THAT BEGIN:

(A) HAD GIVEN TOO MUCH IN THE SINAI, OUT OF THE ILLUSION THAT ISRAEL COULD THEREBY INSURE ITS POSITION IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA;

(B) WAS OPENING ISRAEL TO PRESSURE FOR FUTURE CONCESSIONS;

(C) HAD ERRED IN MAKING FAR-REACHING CONCESSIONS BEFORE THE NEGOTIATIONS BEGAN;

(D) WAS MISLEADING THE PARTY IN SAYING THAT THE US SUPPORTED HIS PLAN;

(E) WAS WRONG TO AGREE TO ALLOW REFUGEES TO RETURN TO ISRAELI TERRITORY.

4. EMBASSY TEL AVIV REPORTS THAT CABINET SECRETARY

NAOR CALLED THE MEETING A WATERSHED FOR BEGIN. FOR THE FIRST TIME, NAOR SAID, THE DIMENSIONS OF HERUT OPPOSITION TO HIS PROPOSALS WERE STARKLY APPARENT TO BEGIN. MOREOVER, THE TALLY, ACCORDING TO EMBASSY TEL AVIV, INDICATES THAT THE BROAD SUPPORT HERUT GAVE BEGIN IN THE DECEMBER 28 KNESSET VOTE ON HIS PEACE PLAN WAS NO LONGER AN ACCURATE MEASURE OF THE OPPOSITION TO HIS PROPOSALS AMONG THE PARTY'S RANK AND FILE.

5. AFTER THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING, HERUT KNESSET MEMBER GEULA COHEN TOLD REPORTERS THAT SHE WILL WORK TO CONSOLIDATE A NUCLEUS OF OPPOSITION TO THE BEGIN PLAN WITHIN HERUT. SHE NOTED THAT THERE NOW EXISTS A NUCLEUS OF HERUTNIKS "WHO ARE NOT PREPARED TO HAVE ANYONE THINK
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FOR THEM." KATZ CONFIRMED THAT HE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITHIN HERUT IN OPPOSITION TO THE BEGIN PLAN.

6. AS HERUTNIKS EMERGE FROM THE SHOCKS THEY HAVE SUFFERED SINCE NOVEMBER, OPPOSITION TO BEGIN'S MOVES CAN BE EXPECTED TO INCREASE. WHILE SOME LEADING HERUT FIGURES HAVE BEEN CO-OPTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER, OTHERS ARE LIKELY TO TURN FOR GUIDANCE TO THE BELIEFS THEY HAVE ESPOUSED FOR MANY YEARS.

7. BEGIN'S ABILITY TO HEAD OFF CHALLENGES FROM THESE HAWKISH ELEMENTS--WHETHER IN HERUT, LA'AM, OR AMONG THE NRP HAWKS--APPEARS TO TURN UPON TWO CONSIDERATIONS: HIS ABILITY TO ACHIEVE A PEACE AGREEMENT WHICH WILL SATISFY THE MINIMAL SECURITY AND IDEOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE HARDLINERS; AND HIS ABILITY TO CO-OPT POTENTIAL LEADERS OF A REVOLT.

8. IN THIS CONTEXT, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE PLAN WHICH HAS GENERATED SO MUCH OPPOSITION WITHIN HERUT DOES NOT EVEN ENTAIL ANY ACTUAL TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA OR GIVING UP SOVEREIGNTY THERE. FINALLY, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT SHARON OPENLY BACKED KATZ, EVEN WHILE EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR BEGIN'S PLAN. THIS SEEMS TO BE ONE MORE SIGN THAT SHARON'S STRATEGY IS TWO-PRONGED: PUBLICLY SUBSCRIBING TO BEGIN'S CONCESSIONS WHILE WORKING WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT TO CHANGE THEIR MEANING. (CONFIDENTIAL)

9. JORDAN. COMMENTING ON JORDAN'S MOOD AFTER THE PRESIDENT CARTER-KING HUSSEIN TALKS, EMBASSY AMMAN SEES THE CURRENT ATTITUDE AS "WAIT-AND-SEE" AND "JORDAN-SHOULD-STAND-PAT." THIS IS TEMPERED BY THE FEELING
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THAT BEGIN HAS BEEN TOO TOUGH ON SADAT AND THAT CONSEQUENTLY SADAT IS LOSING GROUND IN ARAB PUBLIC OPINION. THE US IS SEEN AS THE KEY ACTOR, BUT THERE IS GROWING SKEPTICISM ABOUT WHETHER THE US CAN OR WILL PRODUCE THE NECESSARY RESULTS. THE EMBASSY ALSO HAS NOTED LITTLE ENTHUSIASM FOR JORDAN'S ENTERING THE NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE WEST BANK ON BEHALF OF THE PALESTINIANS, A ROLE REGARDED AS THE PALESTINIANS' RESPONSIBILITY.

10. THE EMBASSY HAS ALSO REPORTED ON GROWING SIGNS OF CONTINUED LIBYAN INTEREST IN SOME SORT OF A JORDANIAN-LIBYAN DEAL. WHILE THE OUTCOME OF THEIR PRESENT DEALINGS IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN AND THEIR COURSE WILL DOUBTLESS BE AFFECTED BY CAIRO-JERUSALEM NEGOTIATIONS, IT WOULD NOT BE PARTICULARLY SURPRISING IF THERE WERE A LIBYAN/JORDANIAN DEAL IN COMING WEEKS, INVOLVING LIBYAN MONEY AND POSSIBLY LIMITED GOJ AGREEMENT TO OFFER MILITARY

TRAINING. HOWEVER, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT NECESSARILY AFFECT THE LONG-TERM JORDANIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT HUSSEIN WOULD BE READY TO SACRIFICE ANY LIBYAN CONNECTION IF SOMETHING HELPFUL WORKS OUT ON THE NEGOTIATING FRONT. IN THAT CASE, HE WOULD MORE LIKELY TURN THE LIBYAN APPROACH INTO A ONE-SHOT INFUSION OF FUNDS AND "LIVE WITH" THE WINDFALL. (SECRET)

11. PALESTINIANS. IN RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH WESTERNERS, CHAIRMAN OF THE PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL FAHUM MAINTAINED THAT:

(A) THE MODERATES HAVE MAINTAINED CONTROL OF THE PLO IN SPITE OF THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY SADAT'S ISRAEL VISIT AND ITS AFTERMATH;

(B) ARAFAT HAS MANAGED TO STABILIZE HIS POSITION AND
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IS NOT NOW THREATENED;

(C) TO RETAIN THIS CONTROL, THE MODERATES WERE MOVING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE REJECTIONISTS' VIEWPOINT;

(D) IT DOES NOT MATTER TO THE PLO WHO NEGOTIATES WITH THE ISRAELIS, AS LONG AS THEY WITHDRAW FROM THE

WEST BANK AND GAZA, AND THUS THE PLO WOULD FIND A WAY TO COME ON BOARD IF SADAT OBTAINED FROM ISRAEL A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES ALONG THE LINES OF HIS KNESSET ADDRESS.

12. MEANWHILE, SOURCES IN BEIRUT HAVE DESCRIBED PLO LEADER ARAFAT AND HIS ASSOCIATES AS "REALLY SHAKEN" BY THE ASSASSINATION OF THE PLO LONDON REPRESENTATIVE. THEY SEEM CONVINCED THAT THE MURDER WAS ENGINEERED IN BAGHDAD AND VOWED IT NOT GO UNAVENGED. ARAFAT'S GROUP IS SAID ALSO TO BELIEVE THAT ITS "MODERATE POSITIONS" PRECIPITATED THAT POLITICAL KILLING AND THAT IT WOULD NOW HAVE TO BE MORE CAREFUL. IT WAS ALSO NOTED THAT THE PLO WOULD HAVE TO DEAL A LOT MORE SEVERELY WITH PALESTINIANS ON THE WEST BANK. THOSE WHO "BETRAY THE MOVEMENT" WOULD BE ELIMINATED BY ACTIONS THAT WOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE PLO AS "EXECUTIONS" NOT MURDERS. (SECRET/NOFORN)

13. EMBASSY BEIRUT REPORTED THAT SARKIS, IN A JANUARY 6 SPEECH, MADE A STRONG DECLARATION OF LEBANON'S UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT ANY MIDEAST SOLUTION WHICH PROVIDES FOR RESETTLEMENT OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES ON ITS SOIL. THE EMBASSY COMMENTED THAT THE DECLARATION SHOULD BE READ IN THE CONTEXT OF SARKIS' EFFORTS TO PROMOTE SOME MOVEMENT TOWARD A NATIONAL CONSENSUS; HE
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HAS PICKED AN ISSUE OF ALMOST UNANIMOUS CONCERN TO BOTH CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM LEBANESE. CHRISTIAN LEADERS HAVE WIDELY SUPPORTED SARKIS' STATEMENT, AS HAVE SEVERAL TRADITIONAL MUSLIM LEADERS. WHILE MANY OF THEM AGREE THAT LEBANON COULD NOT ACCEPT THE PALESTINIANS, THEY RHETORICALLY ASK "WHERE COULD THE PALESTINIANS GO?"

14. OUR DEFENSE ATTACHE IN BEIRUT REPORTS THAT GENERAL KHOURY IS CONFIDENT THAT HE NOW HAS THE SUPPORT OF SHAMOUN, GEMAYEL AND FRANJIYAH FOR REBUILDING THE ARMY. NEARLY 600 RECRUITS WILL SOON FINISH TRAINING. KHOURY REPORTEDLY FEELS HE WILL HAVE ENOUGH STRUCTURED BATTALIONS TO BEGIN PHASING OUT THE ADF WITHIN THREE MONTHS. BY THE END OF MARCH HE WILL HAVE NINE BATTALIONS. (CONFIDENTIAL) CHRISTOPHER

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